

*Fugs on VC killed
good since Jan 67
(US eyes).*

New elements:

- 1. US/DRV strikes against NVN.
- 2. US strikes in SVN.
- 3. DRV regular units? & Northerners from Kontum to Qui Nhon
4. VC effort to cut off north: salient to sea, in II Corps, interdiction of roads, RR
5. Proof of sea infiltration; USN efforts to block it.
- 6. Marines; other combat troops.
- 7. Increase in US ~~non~~ combat support troops.
8. Refugees (e.g. from northern Binh Dinh)
- MA* 9. Reports of moves of cadre and troops into north.

*cont. 57-64
19,678 unconf. Total
17,771 37449*

69: 4476 3,086

VC Strength: 5 regimental hqs, 53 battalions, 142 separate companies;
38,460 main force strength.
unconfirmed main force strength: 8,000.
irregular strength: 100,000

total: 146,000

Infiltration: 38,000?

Has professional command, logistics, communications and personnel systems

- ✓ March: 31 assassinations and kidnappings of local officials (18 in I Corps;
11 in Thua Thien Province).

RVNAF Weapons losses:	1962	5.2	VC	4.0
	1963	8.3		5.4
	1964	13.7		5.9

1964:	individual weapons	12,495
	50 cal MG	7
	60 mm mortar	85
	81 mm mortar	4
<i>VC: 150</i>	57 mm RR	2
<i>20</i>	75 RR	1
	4.2 mortar	1

*VC have: at least 130 81 mm
 > 300 60s
 ~ 75's 20
50% of MF where 57: 150*

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Problems: (Taylor): Generate sufficient manpower (military, PF, police) to
establish necessary preponderance of strength;
end leadership, direction and support from NVN;
maintain stable government in Saigon and provinces.

Goals (Taylor): establish peace and stability in SVN, allow its people to choose
freely their own government, and to defeat the efforts of NVN to
force communism upon them.

We are not trying: (to gain a permanent military foothold; bases; widen war;)
A just peace: free, independent SVN.

~~GoodThux~~

April 7-9 Marine action, Binh Dinh.

DRV has "played the game", refrained from max. psychological pressure on GVN, by keeping actions covert, not acknowledging them (contrast to Indonesia vs. Malaysia--in effect, denying the "existence" of a sovereign Malaysia. We would not be claiming non-existence of DRV nor "puniness," insignificance; we would be claiming necessity ~~invasion~~ (for GVN), in response to their behavior: as in our recon over Cuba; and actions would validate our characterization of their ~~Reason~~ behavior (i.e., both our actions and our overtness). RESPONDING COVERTLY IS BETTER THAN NOT RESPONDING; BUT CAN WE WIN THIS "GAME"? (IN TIME) Infiltration as a whole: numbers, types. PUBLIC CHALLENGE WOULD INVITE PUBLIC RESPONSE, NEW "GAME"

Sea infiltration. Before junk force. After junk force.

But evidence of continued shipment.

Impossibility of problem. Coastline, internal waterways; freighters, transfer to junks, transit through Cambodia.

Need to: a) attack at source;

b) deter To convince DRV that it must pay a price in NVN for its actions in and against SVN.
desire

US finds their ~~action~~ understandable; means appropriate (threat by sea;

~~attacks~~ response from sea. ~~We have~~ They have not asked for combat support by US--has not been necessary--and we have given DRV no excuse to associate SVN gives us sufficient info for this purpose.

our naval activity, such as patrols, with SVN operations. We also sympathize with desire of SVN to maintain operational secrecy w.r.t. their actions, to protect their crews.

Assume sequence: action; DRV denunciation, as it begins to bite; GVN acknowledgement that operations do occur, while declining to go into details that would help DRV to oppose them, either in general or on specific missions. Question raised in US (if raised earlier than GVN announcement, speed up GVN announcement before replying in US); US says--as in previously secret testimony--yes, we know about these--and we are told enough to get out of the way--and we approve heartily--natural and useful response to DRV aggression. (Is GVN at war with DRV? Well, is DRV at war with GVN? GVN actions are limited response to the form of aggression the DRV is using; if that stopped, GVN actions would stop; goal of these actions is simply to get them to stop their infiltrations--not to take over DRV territory, or change legitimate --or acknowledged!--actions, or to change or takeover DRV government.

defending?
Why are they needed, at this time? Who will they be fighting for? and who will they be fighting against? What will they be fighting for?

Need for more troops.

Why needed: neither our evidence of commitment to defense--our advisers and support, our interdiction bombing, our prior commitments of troops--nor our willingness for unconditional discussions have persuaded DRV to drop attempt to win a military victory in SVN. On the contrary, perhaps in apprehension of the growing effectiveness of our measures both in the South and the North, the leaders in Hanoi have clearly stepped up their campaign of infiltration and attacks in a major effort to quicken their victory. Their target is to crack, this summer, by achieving a series of destructive attacks on isolated ARVN units and district towns, the major obstacle to their success: the as-yet-unbroken offensive spirit and will to resist of the ARVN. They aim at decisive results this summer.

To inflict heavy casualties, they take casualties
They newly armed: all with new families of weapons
reinforced by regular units

~~ARVN numerically superior, but includes training~~
~~ARVN numerically superior in SVN, but~~

VC numerically inferior within SVN: but comparison is misleading: staff, command, logistics and supply, training largely in NEN. Forces within SVN represent ~~an~~ nearly all combat units: which can

ARVN forces have countrywide defensive responsibilities; low reserves; VC can muster numerically superior combat strength against isolated outposts, ~~and~~ probing forces or reinforcing columns. Could launch many destructive attacks, ~~clear that VC would~~ if willing to risk heavy casualties. Clear that they have chosen this course: 5000/2000.

We do not intend to stand by and let ARVN bear this test alone. We too are being tested; and we shall not fail to meet this challenge to our commitments, our determination, our sense of national honor and national interest.

Why are they fighting?

Oct 19, 1964

0830--1300. Look over testimony on proliferation; help prepare factsheets for McN briefing to Pres on implications of Chicom nuclear capability, nuclear spread. Talk to Kramish on nuclear spread.

lunch with hsr: discuss NATO project

briefed on XCAEOLG

corrections to Wagner on article on ISA

talk to Heymann

(going on: cross-border, 34A, Congo planning; HNC)

7-11: clean up cables

11:30: talk to Andy Marshall.

Oct 20, 1964

Discussion by hsr, Vogt, Legere with JTM prior to meeting with Thompson at State on NATO strategy, fall schedule.

ISA Staff meeting
Discussion of NATO project with Andy Marshall

Lunch with Wainstein: N

Talk with Rowen on NATO project

Talk with Men and Murray on NATO project

Read Friedman papers on Cuba, disclosure.

34A authorization: 1600 (Col. Van Duyn): Pres OK.

1/29/68

Return to Mr. McNoughton has seen SVN - Jan

1. How is T's departure handled? Is it possible, under pressure from Buddhists?
2. Will Catholics have a place in the new government? Will they be satisfied? If they aren't, what might they do?
3. Will the plotters-against-Khanh be active (Thieu? Co? Thao. Khiem?) or will they accept situation? What happens to Minh? Will Army be united, or continue to be wrapped up in political struggle?
4. Will Khanh move toward powers of Vung Tau Charter, or beyond? Will he get away with it this time--with Buddhists, Catholics, Army? Do we care? (i.e., if he acquires dictatorial powers)? Or will everyone in Saigon, and Mission, and Washington, be occupied in counterbalancing Khanh or getting rid of him?
5. Who are some Buddhist leaders (besides Tri Quang and Tam Chau and Giac) and some Catholic leaders and why don't we ever hear ~~their~~ about them and from them? (We do get views of subordinate Army officers, and Buu, and occasionally a politician).
6. What do we know about the probable reactions of various factions--Buddhists, students, Catholics, sects, man-in-the-street--to US strikes against the North, accompanied by NVN threats and VC "reprisals"? How do we know it?
7. Does Thai Government (and Laos, Phillippines, Malaysia, Australia, Taiwan) have an opinion about what we should be doing in SVN, or what we are doing wrong (opinions that may color their interpretation of developments, US usefulness as an ally, etc.)?
8. What are tests and evidence to help discriminate between at least following two theories:
 - A. Khanh decided, perhaps last August (soon after Tonkin Gulf), that US would not take actions essential to encourage Army and people by showing them "light at the end of the tunnel", (i.e., a sustained program of strikes against the North), and decided that only alternative was a negotiated settlement within SVN (and perhaps with NVN, by South Vietnamese); he agreed with Buddhist leaders that efforts would be coordinated to this end (alternatively, they are moving in parallel, tacitly). Defects of Huong regime were: it promised to be too effective and to prolong the war, it wasn't moving in the right direction, Khanh was not high enough in it, and it was alienating the Buddhist support that Khanh wanted. So Khanh either called on the Buddhists, or exploited Buddhist pressures (which could have been withstood). Buddhist motives: Tri Quang didn't control government; it wasn't going in right direction (negot. and looked too effective; Khanh could be relied on to keep Army from sitting hard on demonstrations.
Alternatively: Khanh and Tri Quang don't have fixed goals, e.g., neutralism, but want controlling voice in government.

8. Explanation B: Tri Quang/Tam Chau don't want to control government, merely to have voice in it appropriate to their actual political power. Huong didn't permit them this, freezing them out of discussion on Cabinet or policy on ground (unrealistic for SVN) that "religion and politics shouldn't mix). Thus they felt genuine grievance. Khanh had both a desire to get back in command and a genuine concern for consequences of ignoring Buddhist desires and Buddhist pressures.

If B, Questions: Will Buddhists now be satisfied with less than control, after tasting victory

Will new government provide acceptable role for all three major power factions: Army, Buddhists, Catholics?

9. Are there too many military personnel in SVN? Could/should there be return to an earlier status; or should there be a new balance, at a lower level, with a higher proportion of US personnel in the field?
10. Are there circumstances in which we would accept a much larger role in the direction of ~~politi~~ military/economic programs in SVN?
11. Some issues of policy and its interpretation by US:
- A. Are we "helping someone who asked for assistance" or "protecting US security by halting Communist expansion"?
(Former implausible in light of what we have done already; under latter, hard to explain being quick to reduce involvement when "invited out" by GVN, or being slow to increase involvement and press North when needed.)
- B. Do we still have "minimum requirements" for government performance and stability before going into Phase II; or is it time for Phase II to be started as an "~~emergency~~" "emergency pulmotor" operation?

Feb. 26

1. As events get beyond the stage of planning, internal debate and covert action into a phase of open, ~~xxx~~ acknowledged, violent action, a lot more governments are going to get into the act. Initiatives and coalitions ~~xxxx~~ by "third parties" are going to make our calculations much more complex, uncertain, and prone to surprise than before.

2. Contingencies for Chicoms to worry about:

a) Though we say we want no wider war, mere lack of success and pressure to justify earlier actions may well lead us to expand attacks; and there is evidence that we might eventually look for an excuse to hit Chinese targets--particularly their nuclear facilities.

b) Though we say we don't want to overturn the DRV:

1) We might change our mind--as we did in Korea after Inchon, having earlier said that we had no intention to unify Korea. This might be either the product of success (as in Korea) or of frustration and the need to have goals commensurate with the effort and sacrifices we were making.

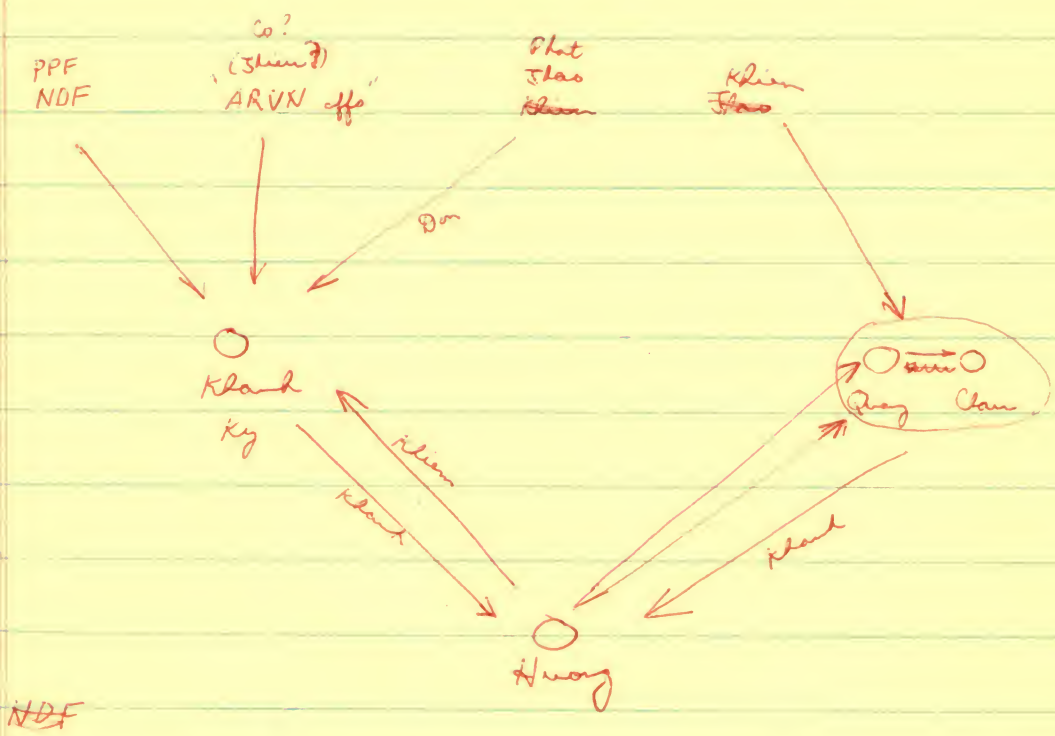
2) Attacks on DRV might (appear to Chinese to be likely to) have an unstabilizing effect on that regime, whether we intended this or not. (Early effects might be to promote cohesion and morale; but later effects, if campaign were prolonged, might be in favor of "peace and neutralism.")

3. Any of these prospects might impel Chicoms/DRV, rather than to "eat" a rather long campaign of strikes, to act fast and decisively to shove us out before (they think) we are irrevocably committed to expanded action.

(An alternative would be to cool off the campaign by offering negotiations; but that might not appear as effective or as desirable to them).

Coups

Jan 25, 1964



A. USG/Taylor position that "duly constituted government...without improper interference from any group" is essential to defeat VC and is basis for US support;

- a. What is our attitude on current, civilian government vs. open or covert military government?
- b. How bad is return of Khanh or other military leader?

B. ~~Notes~~ Possible attitudes of USG:

- a. Just another turnover at top; what we care about is pacification program; all we care about is that whoever is at top in Saigon supports, or doesn't interfere with, that program; we want enough stability to get on with the show. (Colby)
- b. We have lost confidence in ability of military government to rally support, carry out program that will maintain stability and promote pacification; a civilian government is essential to winning fight and to continued U.S. aid.
- c. Latest turnover shows lack of adequate stability for increasing U.S. involvement; in fact, suggests unlikelihood that any government will provide adequate basis, or that, or even for continuing present level; we have "lost confidence in SVN."
- d. Current military government (in effect) clearly doesn't want our advice or assistance on acceptable terms; we don't stay where we're not wanted; if government doesn't change, or change its attitude...

Factors:

1. Christmas Surprises:

- a) Assassinations by Thi (Suu, Huong, Khanh); complete military takeover
- b) Rampage by Buddhists and suicide of Tam Chau
- c) VC attack on Saigon; major VC push
- d) Collapse or slowdown of military operations (e.g., disillusion of "very young" officers, who ~~respect~~ disagree with Young Turks about Old Generals, especially Big Minh, and who disapprove of recent moves, on basis of briefing by American counterparts).
- e) VC spectacular, or attack on US troops, that challenges US to hit NVN.
- f) Montagnard uprising; or Pathet Lao/VM push in Laos.

2. Stocking presents (lesser, more likely)

- a) Physical/moral collapse of Huong/Suu (especially given failure of ~~backing~~ U.S. efforts), or other events mentioned).
- b) Taylor "loses confidence" of Armed Forces Council (as well as Khanh); attacked publicly by Khanh and others.
- c) Loss of contact between Country Team and GVN, especially Army; US Advisors isolated or expelled from divisions or lower, by order of Armed Forces Council (which could lead to 1d), perhaps because of US briefings to counterparts.
- d)

3. Uncertainties

- a) Motives of Young Turks ~~for~~, accounting for urgency (possibly secret "information" on HNC, still unknown to us).
- b) Involvement of Khanh (possibly earlier neutral or even unwilling; or, may have been active pusher, either to get rid of Big Minh, to establish his higher authority, or other reasons); motives, current intentions of Khanh.
- c) Collusion with Buddhists; expectations, intentions of Tri Quang, Tam Chau.
- d) Extent, depth of anti-American feeling among military.

4. Personal involvement of Taylor, Khanh.

- a) Taylor urged Suu to delay signing retirement order; told Huong he would have full U.S. support in confrontation with Khanh. Was caught by surprise by ~~Khanh move~~ Young Turk (Khanh?) move; Khanh held press conference and announced Decree No. 1 against Taylor's wishes; told Khanh and others ~~and~~ that Khanh had lost his confidence and should go; has taken position with GVN and USG that maintenance of civilian gov is essential and that HNC must be restored.
- b) Khanh identified by Taylor with move; old lack of sympathy between T and K; likelihood of being scapegoat if move failed; lack of support generally by Young Turks, possibility of gaining support as leader against common "threat," US interference; Taylor's direct challenge to him. K endorsement of YT action, assertion of military "higher responsibility", linking of "foreigners and Communists," direct denunciation of Taylor.